



## How To React In A Skid

No matter how good a driver you think you are, there will be times when your perceptions and skills are put to the test. At no time is this more prevalent than when your car starts to skid. There is little that can compare with the realization that your two thousand pound vehicle is no longer under your control. While it is true that you can face the possibility of going into a skid at any time, the chances dramatically increase during inclement weather.

Unfortunately, not everyone knows how to properly react when entering a skid (or fishtail). Instead of panicking, take a deep breath. This should help you control your reflexes enough to keep yourself from overreacting.

There are two different types of skids: front wheel skids and rear wheel skids. A front wheel skid occurs when the entire car starts drifting in a direction other than the driver's intended course. This type of skid tends to occur when a driver enters a curve too quickly. If your car enters a front wheel skid, ease off the accelerator. If you are driving a car with a manual transmission, depress the clutch. Keep your eyes focused on a target ahead of you and try to steer the car back on course. If you don't regain control of the car within 2-3 seconds, THEN depress the brake lightly. Braking will help to transfer power to the front of the car; braking too suddenly, however, can cause the wheels to lock, which will make the skid worse.

A rear wheel skid occurs when the back end of the car slides out to the right or left; this is also known as "fishtailing." At some point, someone has probably told you to "turn into the skid." However, this advice can be misleading. Say that the back end of your car suddenly slides out to the right; you don't want to turn your wheel sharply to the right as well, especially if you are traveling at a high rate of speed. You want to turn to the right JUST ENOUGH to straighten out the car. Focusing on a target in the distance will help prevent you from "over-correcting." As you turn, slowly ease off the accelerator. Avoid the temptation to brake suddenly.

Finally, there are a few tips to consider when trying to prevent skids:

1. Make sure your tires have adequate treads. Tires are made with a "wear bar" in the treads; if the level of the tire reaches that of the "wear bar", it is time to get new tires. You can also check your tires by inserting a penny into the tread upside-down. Lincoln's head should be partially covered.
2. Drive slowly in wet, icy, or snowy conditions.
3. Keep an appropriate distance between you and the car ahead of you. A general rule of thumb is 4 car lengths for every 10 mph. This way, you will have plenty of time to react if the driver in front of you stops; trying to stop too suddenly can cause a skid.
4. Slow down before entering a curve or bend. Taking a curve too quickly or braking suddenly while going around a bend can cause skids.